

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-14 PC-05 OC-06
CCO-00 COME-00 AID-05 HEW-06 INR-07 PA-02 PRS-01
HA-05 CA-01 SCS-06 EB-08 OPR-02 A-01 /092 W
-----105964 251052Z /14

O R 291002Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4913

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS BANJUL 1651

STATE FOR AF/W

PASS AID DISASTER RELIEF OFFICE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID ENRG GA

SUBJ: MAJOR POWER FAILURE IN BANJUL

1. BANJUL AND SUBURBS NOW SUFFERING ACUTE FAILURE ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLY BECAUSE OF EXPLOSION AT POWER PLANT EVENING NOV 22. SECRETARY GENERAL, GOTG, HAS ASKED CHARGE, ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT JAWARA, IF US WOULD BE ABLE RENDER EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. SIMILAR APPEAL HAS ALSO BEEN MADE TO UK HIGH COMMISSIONER.

2. URBAN COMPLEX HERE IS NORMALLY SERVED BY THREE LARGE DIESEL GENERATORS, OF THREE MEGAWATTS EACH, OPERATED BY GAMBIA UTILITIES CORP., A PARASTATAL COMPANY. ONE OF THESE LARGE GENERATORS BLEW UP ON NOV 22, DAMAGING THE OTHERS. ONE OF THE DAMAGED GENERATORS HAS BEEN REPAIRED AND IS OPERATING, THE OTHER MAY BE OPERATIONAL IN A SHORT WHILE. THUS, AT PRESENT, GREATER BANJUL IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON ONE GENERATOR WHICH
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UNABLE TO SUPPLY MORE THAN 50 PER CENT OF DEMAND. OF COURSE, THERE IS NO BACK-UP CAPACITY IF THIS FAILS.

3. RESULT OF PROBLEM IS THAT BANJUL HAS POWER FROM 2300 HOURS TO 1800 HOURS, AND SUBURBAN COMPLEX REMAINING FIVE HOURS, I.E. 1800 TO 2300. WATER SERVICE (DEPENDENT ON ELECTRIC PUMPS) IS ONLY AVAILABLE FOR TWO HOURS IN MORNING AND FROM TWO TO THREE

HOURS IN EVENING. THUS, URBAN POPULATION OF ABOUT 90,000 IS SUFFERING SEVERE DISRUPTION, WITH CLEAR PROSPECT OF INCREASING HEALTH AND SANITATION PROBLEMS.

4. UNDER IBRD TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT, GAMBIA HAS THREE MEGAWATT GENERATOR ON ORDER, EXPECTED DELIVERY IS SIX MONTHS. GOTG IS EXPLORING GENERATOR PURCHASE ON URGENT BASIS WITH SEVERAL UK FIRMS IN LONDON. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION CABLED LONDON NOV 24 TO ASCERTAIN IF EMERGENCY STAND-BY EQUIPMENT COULD BE FLOWN OUT BY RAF.

5. GAMBIANS CONSIDER POWER PROBLEM TO BE OF DISASTER PROPORTIONS, AND ARE ASKING CLOSEST FRIENDS FOR EMERGENCY HELP. SITUATION IS SERIOUS, WITH GRAVEST IMPLICATIONS IF FURTHER BREAK DOWN OCCURS. EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT NOTIFY APPROPRIATE AGENCIES, INCLUDING DOD, TO SEE IF SOME URGENT US ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. AFTER COORDINATING WITH LONDON, WE WONDER IF EMERGENCY GENERATOR COULD BE SUPPLIED FROM US FORCES IN EUROPE IN EVENT UK UNABLE TO ASSIST. BASIC NEED IS FOR EMERGENCY STAND-BY CAPABILITY THAT COULD REMAIN HERE IN PLACE UNTIL POWER STATION CAN RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS, PERIOD WHICH MIGHT RUN INTO SEVERAL MONTHS. WYGANT

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANJUL01651
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Document Unique ID: 00
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